Charges, and also because of BSNL which is shouldering the basic responsibility of rural telephony, are properly strengthened.

SHRI A. RAJA: Sir, the point is well taken. As already submitted to the House, all these point are well taken. The USO Fund is created under the statute, namely the Indian Telegraph Act; the rules are already framed. All these points were well taken. I am deeply concerned about all these things. Since the decision is taken only on the 1st of this month or in the first week of this month, I am deeply concerned about all these speculations and all these developments that have been happening in the ADC and other areas, including the USO Fund. If necessary, the USO rules will be amended after a healthy discussion which is going to be held in the Ministry by constituting a Committee.

श्री बृजभूषण तिवारी: सभापति महोदय, जैसा कि अभी मंत्री जी ने अपने जवाब में कहा है कि बीएसएनएल का जो मार्केट फोर्स है, उस मार्केट फोर्सेस के कारण उसका प्रभाव कम हो रहा है और मैं पूछना चाहता हूं कि इधर बीएसएनएल की जो inefficiency है और उसी के साथ-साथ ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में या शहरी क्षेत्रों में भी जो स्थिर टेलीफोन है, उसकी स्थिति दिनों दिन इतनी खराब होती जा रही है कि वह इस्तेमाल करने लायक नहीं रह गया है, इसलिए मैं मंत्री जी से सीधा पूछना चाहता हूं कि इसमें सुधार के लिए उन्होंने क्या उपाय किए हैं और क्या इसके लिए उन्होंने कोई समय सीमा भी निश्चित की है?

SHRI A. RAJA: Sir, the usage of landlines is coming down. It is true. Of course, in the Eleventh Plan, the Government has announced a National e-Goverance Progamme under which the village panchayats will have a service centre. We are going to set up a Community Service Centre invariably in all villages where new technology is going to be put up through the landline. I hope all these village panchayat telephones or the telephones available in the village panchayats will be used by the Community Service Centre also. That is why I submitted before the House that we want to wipe out the annual gross revenue collected from the landlines, which may amount to Rs. 1,000 crores, to save the BSNL and to increase rural tele density. The matter is being considered by the Telecom Commission. A decision will be taken soon.

Reduction of forest cover area

*442. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:††
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the forest cover in the country has been decreasing rapidly during the last few years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise, year-wise;

(c) whether any evaluation has been done of decrease in forest areas through the Joint Forest Management; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the achievements in the protection of forests made so far, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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†† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Kamal Akhtar.

Statement

(a) and (b) No, Sir. The forest cover of the country has more or less stabilized. The forest covers of the country as per 2001, 2003 and 2005 assessments is given below:

Assessment Year	2001	2003	2005
Forest Cover (in km^2)	653,898	677,816	677,088

It can be seen that the forest cover of the country has increased by 23,918 km^2 between 2001 and 2003 assessments, and decreased marginally by 728 km^2 between 2003 and 2005 assessments.

The Forest Survey of India (FSI) carries out forest cover assessment of the country using remote sensing technology once every two years.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. No such evaluation for decrease in forest cover has been done through Joint Forest Management. The protection offered by the Joint Forest Management Committees contribute to regeneration of forests which may lead to increase in forest cover. In addition, the Integrated Forest Protection Scheme being implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, provides financial support to the State/UT Governments for activities encouraging forest protection.

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सभापति महोदय, मंत्री जी ने अपने जवाब में यह स्वीकार किया है कि 2003 से लेकर 2005 तक 728 वर्ग किलोमीटर वन क्षेत्र में कमी आई है, जब कि वास्तविकता इससे अलग है। मैं समझता हूं कि मंत्री जी ने जवाब में केवल वन क्षेत्र ले लिए हैं, जब कि आबादी बढ़ने के बाद से, चाहे हाई-वे का निर्माण हो, चाहे रेल लाइन का निर्माण हो, या दूसरे डिपार्टमेंट्स के काम हों, इसके लिए लगातार पेड़ों की कटाई हो रही है और इन पेड़ों की कटाई का सीधा संबंध पर्यावरण से है। आज देश के पर्यावरण में परिवर्तन हो रहे हैं, यह निश्चित तौर पर इसी बात का सबूत है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूं कि क्या सरकार ने कोई ऐसी योजना बनाई है, जिसके तहत जितने पेड़ साल में काटे जा रहे हैं, चाहे वे किन्हीं कारणों से काटे जा रहे हों, उतने ही पेड़ लगाना सुनिश्चित किया जाए, क्या कोई ऐसी स्कीम सरकार ने चालू की है? क्या इसके लिए कोई ऐसा प्रावधान बनाया गया है?

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, under the Forest Conservation Act, only forest land has been diverted for non-forest purposes. At the same time, under the provisions they will have to provide replantation also. That is a compulsory one.

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी पूछना चाहता हूं कि दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में जंगलों की सुरक्षा के लिए कितनी धनराशि खर्च की गई तथा ग्यारहवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में जंगलों की सुरक्षा के लिए कितनी धनराशि निर्धारित की गई है?

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, we are receiving funds under Tiger Project, Elephant Project, etc., and for improving the National Parks, etc. I will collect the data about all these things and submit to the House.

श्री अबू आसिम आज़मी: सभापति महोदय, जैसा कि मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में कहा कि वन आवरण क्षेत्र स्थिर है, जिस प्रकार से आबादी बढ़ रही है, वातावरण में प्रदूषण के कारण पर्यावरण दूषित हो रहा है, इसको देखते हुए क्या सरकार इस आवरण क्षेत्र को और बढ़ाने पर विचार कर रही है? यदि हां, तो इसके लिए सरकार ने कोई मास्टर प्लान बनाया है या नहीं? सर, क्या यह सही है कि 2003 से 2005 के बीच में फॉरेस्ट सर्वे इंडिया की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक नागालैण्ड, मणिपुर, छत्तीसगढ़ और मध्य प्रदेश में लगभग 728 वर्ग किलोमीटर जंगल दो सालों में खत्म हो चुके हैं और 630 वर्ग किलोमीटर जंगल, जिसमें पैदावार होती थी, वह भी डिग्रेडेड हो गया है, जिससे ecological value खत्म हो गई है, यदि हां, तो इसका ब्यौरा क्या है? ऐसा होने का क्या कारण है?

†[شری ابو عاصم اعظمی : سبھا پتی مہودے، جیسا کہ منتری جی نے اپنے اثر میں کہا ہے کہ ون آورن چھیتر استھت ہے، جس پرکار سے آبادی بڑھ رہی ہے، واتاورن میں پردوشن کے کارن پریاورن دوشت ہو رہا ہے، اس کو دیکھتے ہوئے کیا سرکار اس اورن چھیتر کو اور بڑھانے پر وچار کر رہی ہے؟ اگر ہاں، تو اس کے لئے سرکار نے کوئی ماسٹر پلان بنایا ہے یا نہیں؟ سر، کیا یہ صحیح ہے کہ 2003 سے 2005 کے بیچ میں فاریسٹ سروے انڈیا کی رپورٹ کے مطابق، ناگالینڈ، منی پور، چھتیس گڑھ اور مدھیہ پردیش میں لگ بھگ 728 ورگ کلومیٹر جنگل دو سالوں میں ختم ہو چکے ہیں اور 630 ورگ کلومیٹر جنگل، جس میں پیداوار ہوتی تھی، وہ بھی ڈگریڈڈ ہو گیا ہے، جس سے ecological value ختم ہو گئی ہے، اگر ہاں، تو اس کا بیورا کیا ہے؟ ایسا کرنے کا کیا کارن ہے؟]

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Hon. Chairman, Sir, in my reply itself I have admitted that there is a shortfall of 728 square kilometres. But there are certain reasons for that. During 2004, there was a tsunami, that is, destruction caused by the tsunami in the Andaman Nicobar Islands. That is the first one. The submergence of forest land due to construction of dams in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh is the second one. Then shifting cultivation and bamboo flowering in the North East, especially in Nagaland and Manipur. We are having the Green India Programme to develop plantation of trees.

श्री कमाल अख्तर: चेयरमैन सर, मैं आपका संरक्षण चाहता हूं।

श्री सभापति: प्लीज़ ...आपका ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री कमाल अख्तर: मंत्री जी एक भी जवाब नहीं देते हैं। जो हम पूछते हैं, उसका जवाब दिया नहीं जाता है।

श्री सभापति: अगर आपको जवाब ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री कमाल अख्तर: क्या हम लोग इसलिए बैठे हैं कि जो सवाल पूछा जाए ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: उसका दूसरा तरीका है। अभी आप दूसरा सप्लीमेंटरी चलने दीजिए। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, एक भी जवाब नहीं दिया जाता। ...(व्यवधान)... जो अफसर लिखकर देते हैं, वही पढ़ दिया जाता है।

श्री सभापति: प्लीज़ ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, आप हमारे संरक्षक हैं।

श्री सभापति: देखिए, आपको जो जवाब मिला है, अगर आप उसको गलत समझते हैं, तो आप उस सवाल को अलग उठाइए। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, आप जवाब देखिए और पूछिए। ...(व्यवधान)...

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†[Transliteration in Urdu Script]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please don't disrupt the House.

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, एक भी जवाब नहीं दिया जाता है। ...(**व्यवधान**)... सर, प्रधान मंत्री जी यहां पर बैठे हैं। ..(**व्यवधान**)...

श्रीमती जया बच्चन: सर, मंत्री जी को जवाब देना चाहिए। यहां क्वेश्चन ऑवर इसलिए होता है कि मंत्री जी जवाब दें। अगर वे लिखकर ही जवाब देंगे, तो क्वेश्चन ऑवर की क्या जरूरत है? ...(**व्यवधान**)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let me clarify the position for the hon. Member. *(Interruptions).* Would you please resume your place? If the answer is perceived to be factually wrong, then there are procedures for raising the matter. Supplementaries are meant to amplify ...*(Interruptions).* नहीं, आप मेरी बात सुनिए। आप ...(**व्यवधान**)... Please do not interrupt.

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, डेढ़ महीने से टाइम नहीं है मंत्री जी के पास। ...(**व्यवधान**)... सर, Half-an-Hour Discussion के लिए डेढ़ महीना हो गया है, लेकिन उनके पास ...(**व्यवधान**)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Akhtar, I am sorry.

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, डेढ़ महीना हो गया है और इनके पास टाइम नहीं है? ...(**व्यवधान**)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume your place. Please do not interrupt. I have yet to witness any Member coming up and saying that the answer is factually wrong. Then it is a different matter all together. *(Interruptions).*

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, आप बताइए।

श्री सभापति: आप बैठ जाइए। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, डेढ़ महीना हो गया है!

श्री सभापति: आप बैठ जाइए। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री कमाल अख्तर: सर, आपने कहा कि अगर आप satisfied नहीं हैं, तो दोबारा दीजिए।

श्री सभापति: आप बैठ जाइए। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री कमाल अख्तर: तो दोबारा ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: आप बैठ जाइए। ...(**व्यवधान**)... Mr. Akhtar, please sit down. Please don't interrupt. The hon. Member knows that there are established procedures. Please don't try to jump over the procedures.

SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Sir, nobody is trying to jump over the procedure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Either you say that the reply is false. *(Interruptions).* Either say in writing that the reply is misleading, false or incorrect. *(Interruptions).* I am not willing to listen to these verbal interventions. Please don't interrupt.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in this reply, the Government has denied that the forest cover is reducing, which is, in fact, counter to what the general impression among layman as well as among environmentalists is. I would seek two clarifications, One is, when we talk of forest cover, there is dense forest cover and sparse forest cover.

There is a qualitative difference between deodhar forest, for example, in the Himalayas and a sparsely covered area. Would the Minister be kind enough to clarify that these figures that he has given about the forest cover, how much of these could be termed as dense forest

and how much as sparse forest? The second question is: would the Minister also let us know as to what percentage of the total area of India is covered by forest area? There was a figure given to us. I think it was 21 per cent at one point of time. But satellite imagery does not confirm that. Therefore, I would request the Minister to amplify his answer on these questions.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as per the Forest Survey Report, protected forest, as per 2005 Census is 2,16,605 sq. kms.; reserve forest-4,90,028 sq. kms. and unclassified forest-1,33,993 sq. kms. Total comes to 7,69,626 sq. kms., which is given in the reply. This is the protected forest, reserve forest and unclassified forest. Then after that, dense forests are lands with a canopy density of 40 per cent and above. Open forests are lands with a canopy density between 10 and 40 per cent. These are also taken into account.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: The people residing near forest areas in our State of Assam are facing a dangerous situation and are struggling to protect their life and property. Elephants coming out of the forests, destroying properties and sometimes even taking lives is a regular phenomenon. Even the endangered one-horned rhinos and other animals come out of the forest areas. Even as they face the danger of being hunted by poachers, they are also creating havoc in the thickly populated areas in Assam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put the question.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: I would like to draw the attention of the Government to look into this matter and take necessary steps to stop the decline in the forest cover.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, let me first reply to the Member, Dr. Karan Singhji's question. The Forest Survey of India had the following definitions for the state of our forests before 1987. All lands with forest cover having a canopy density of 40 per cent and above, are classified as Dense Forests; Open Forests are lands with forest cover having a canopy density between 10 and 40 per cent. A Scrub Forest is a degraded forest and having a canopy density of less than 10 per cent. This is according to the 1987 Survey.

Coming to the question about elephants, the area referred to is covered under Project Elephant. We have taken necessary steps to protect the forests.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, my question related to hunting by elephant in thickly populated areas. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Please repeat your question.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, I would like to know whether the Forest Department would protect the people who are facing the ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please...

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, the Department of Forests is taking several steps. Firstly, it is the legal measures under various laws, namely, the Indian Forest Act, 1927. Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Forest Conservation Act, etc. These are the legal measures. Then, there are administrative measures and financial measures through which we are protecting the forests. (*Interruptions*)

श्री बनवारी लाल कंछल: सर, इनके जवाब से एक भी सदस्य संतुष्ट नहीं है।

SHRI TIRUCHI SHIVA: Sir, the forest cover of the country has increased by 23,980 sq. kilometres between 2001 and 2003. In the subsequent two years, instead of a proportionate increase, the forest cover has decreased marginally by 728 sq. kilometres. Sir, the rise in the